

## **DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL**

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*The California Highway Patrol is a law enforcement and traffic safety agency reporting to Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Governor Gray Davis.*



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### **CHP COMMISSIONER AND SIX OFFICERS HONORED BY PEACE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION**

**SACRAMENTO**—California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner D.O. “Spike” Helmick today was given the state’s most prestigious law enforcement honor, the Sherman Block Memorial Law Enforcement Professional of the Year award, by the California Peace Officers’ Association (CPOA).

In addition, six CHP officers were given awards of valor for bravery.

Helmick, whose CHP career has spanned more than 30 years, has served as commissioner under two governors. He commands nearly 7,000 officers in 99 Area offices and 15 commercial inspection facilities.

During his tenure, California became the first state in the nation to achieve 90 percent safety belt compliance. The state in 1998 recorded the lowest-ever mileage death rate, 1.19 persons killed per 100 million miles driven.

The award was established to honor former Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block. State Attorney General Bill Lockyer presented the award to Helmick at the CPOA’s state conference.

The officers who received the Award of Valor included:

- Officers Donald Coney and George Foard of the El Cajon Area office who pulled a suicidal woman off a bridge that rose 430 feet off a canyon floor.
- Officers Paul Yonezawa and Peter Kensinger who were on patrol in Los Angeles County when they rescued two Los Angeles County Sheriff’s deputies trapped inside a wrecked patrol vehicle seconds before the car exploded.
- Officers Chad Patton and Harry Jones of the El Cajon Area office, who captured a Barrego Springs bank robber in a shootout after the suspect fled with \$180,000.

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